



## NOTICE OF PREPARATION INITIAL STUDY

September 17, 2007

**TO:** State Clearinghouse  
Responsible and Trustee Agencies  
Interested Agencies and Parties

**FROM:** Sonoma County Water Agency  
404 Aviation Boulevard  
Santa Rosa, CA 95403

### **Wohler-Mirabel 12kV Line Underground Project**

The Sonoma County Water Agency (Agency) is preparing an Initial Study (IS) for the proposed Wohler-Mirabel 12kV Line Underground Project (Project). An Initial Study is a preliminary analysis of the environmental impacts potentially related to implementation of the proposed Project and is used to determine whether a Negative Declaration or an Environmental Impact Report will be prepared in conformance with requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). It is a public document that analyzes the potential environmental effects related to construction, operation, and maintenance of a project and describes ways to avoid or reduce possible environmental damage. The IS for the Project will be prepared by the Agency in accordance with the provisions of CEQA, the State CEQA Guidelines, and the Agency's Procedures for the Implementation of CEQA.

As the lead agency for the proposed Project, the Agency is requesting comments from responsible and trustee agencies, property owners in the project vicinity, and other interested parties regarding the scope and content of the IS. The Agency is interested in comments that public agencies may have regarding the scope and content of the environmental information which is germane to that agency's statutory responsibilities in relation to the proposed Project. The Agency is interested in any comments from the public related to the scope and content of environmental information which should be included in the IS.

**BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR PROJECT:** The Agency is a special district that was created by the California Legislature in 1949 and operates under the direction of a Board of Directors (Board), composed of the members of the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors. The law that created the Agency and defines its powers and duties gives it the authority to produce and furnish surface water and groundwater for beneficial uses, to control flood waters, to generate electricity, and to provide recreational facilities in connection with the Agency's facilities. Legislation enacted in 1994 added the treatment and disposal of wastewater to the Agency's powers and duties.

The Agency is the primary provider of potable water to approximately 600,000 people in Sonoma and Marin Counties. Water is delivered, on a wholesale basis, to the Agency's primary water customers through the Agency's transmission system. The primary water customers, collectively known as the Water Contractors, consist of the cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Petaluma, Cotati, and Sonoma, the North Marin Municipal Water District, Valley of the Moon Water District, and the Town of Windsor. The Agency supplies water to the Water Contractors under an agreement entitled "Restructured Agreement for Water Supply," which was originally executed in 1974 and most recently amended in 2006. The Agency also provides water via the transmission system to other customers such as the Marin Municipal Water District and other local water companies.

The Agency's water production system includes diversion facilities at the Russian River and transmission system components including pipelines, pumps, and storage tanks. This system conveys water from the diversion facilities on the Russian River to service areas in Sonoma County and in northern Marin County. The Agency also owns and operates three groundwater wells that supplement the Russian River Water Supply.

Under existing conditions, the electrical power required to operate the Agency's Russian River Facilities is transmitted by overhead power lines that extend between the Wohler and Mirabel areas. During inclement weather, these lines are vulnerable to damage by falling trees and limbs. Such damage can cause interruption in electrical power which results in the inability to transfer water. The proposed Project will reduce the potential for such interruptions and improve the reliability of the water supply system.

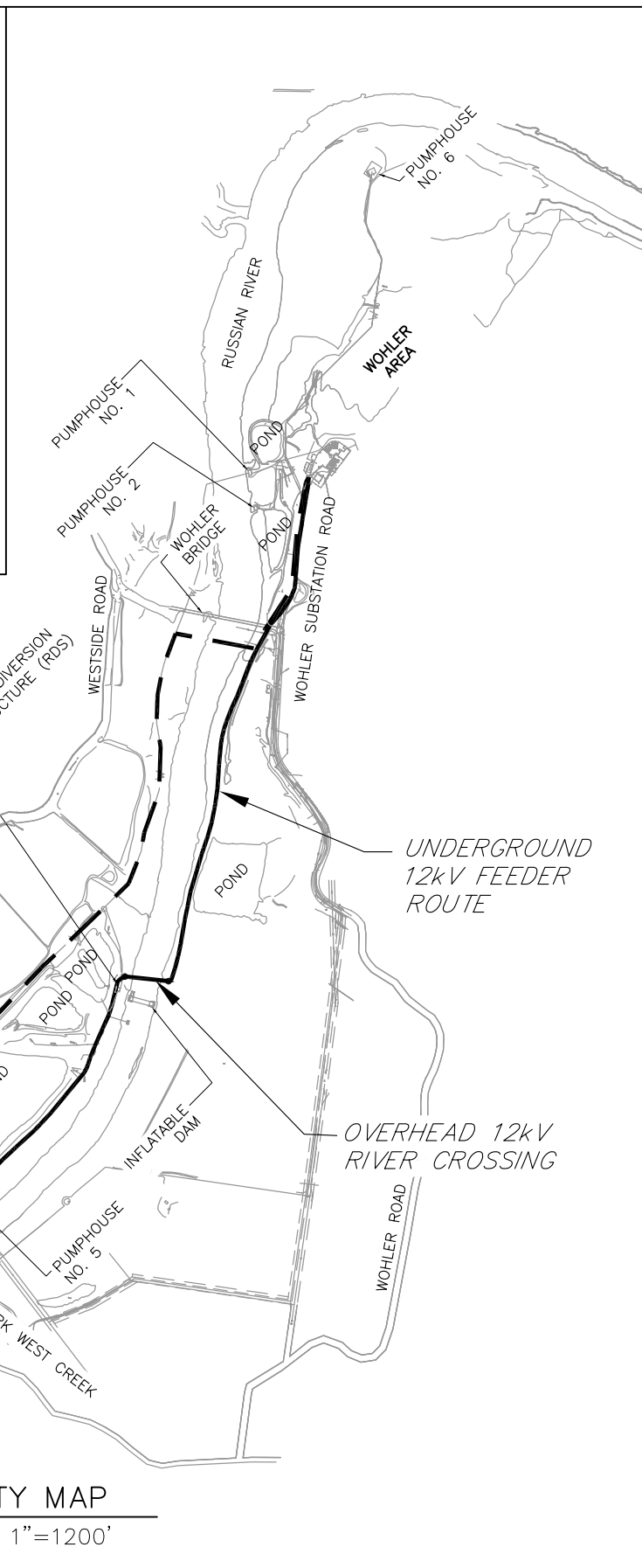
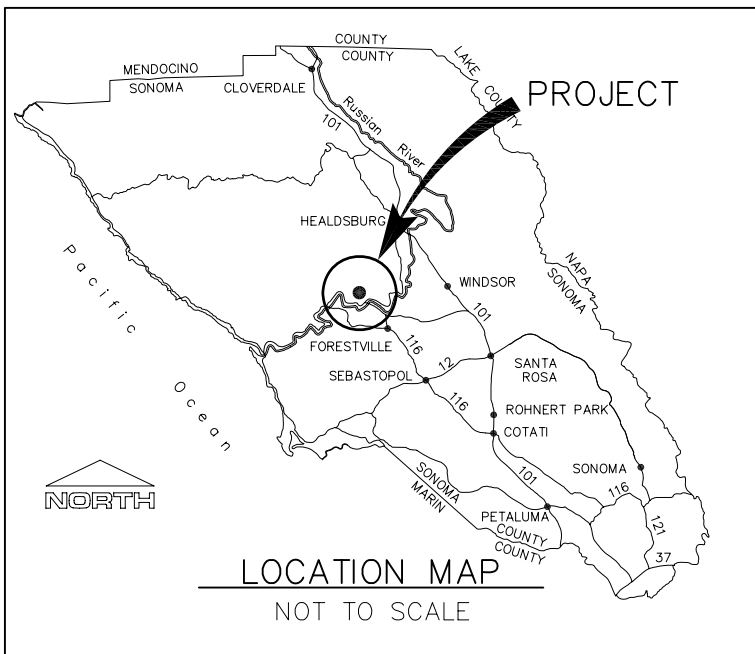
**PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND LOCATION:** The Wohler-Mirabel 12kV Line Underground Project would be located approximately 10 miles northwest of the city of Santa Rosa. The project setting is in a rural portion of Sonoma County along the Middle Reach of the Russian River near Forestville. The project is located along the Agency's Wohler and Mirabel water supply pumping facilities (Exhibit A). The project would include installation of an alternate underground power line and modifications and/or removal of the existing overhead electrical power transmission lines from the Agency's Wohler substation to the Agency's pumphouses and generators at the Mirabel facility.

The underground electrical power lines would consist of concrete encased nonmetallic 12 kilovolt (kV) conduits approximately 8,000 feet long. The underground power lines will run southward from the substation at the Wohler Facility within an existing service road located along the east bank of the Russian River. The 12 kV line will then cross the river as an overhead segment using two poles. The poles will be installed on both sides of the river relatively high on the riverbank, approximately 120 feet upstream north of the inflatable dam at the Agency's River Diversion Structure (RDS). The height of the overhead line will be similar in height to the existing overhead line located near Wohler Bridge. At the western bank of the Russian River, the power line would again be located underground and run southward from the RDS facility to the Agency's pumphouses at the Mirabel facility. The underground electrical power lines would be located within an existing service road located along the western bank of the Russian River.

The underground lines will be installed by standard cut-and-cover methods. The line would be installed within concrete conduit encasements with pull boxes installed at roughly 300-foot intervals to facilitate installation and maintenance of the line.

As part of the Project, approximately 4,000 linear feet of existing overhead 12 kV lines would be removed from within the Mirabel facilities upon completion of the new underground line. Removal of the lines will include removal of existing wood power poles located within the infiltration pond north of Pumphouses 4 and 5. To provide redundancy for power to Mirabel facilities, additional overhead power lines will be installed along the existing service road located along the western bank of the Russian River to connect Mirabel facilities with the RDS. The Project will also include the replacement and/or installation of electrical equipment such as voltage transformers, switchgear and other ancillary equipment within the existing electrical facilities.

The initial study may also discuss alternatives to the proposed Project and alternatives may be added based on input from the public and Regulatory Agencies during the NOP Review Period.



NOTICE OF PREPARATION  
WOHLER/MIRABEL 12kV LINE UNDERGROUND PROJECT  
VICINITY MAP

EXHIBIT  
A

**JURISDICTIONAL/PERMITTING AGENCIES:** The following public entities and agencies may require review of the Project or may have jurisdiction or permitting authority over the Project:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- California Department of Fish and Game
- National Marine Fisheries Service
- Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department
- Sonoma County Transportation and Public Works Department
- State Water Resources Control Board
- Regional Water Quality Control Board, North Coast Region

**FUNDING:** The construction cost for the Project is estimated to be between \$1.06M and \$1.2M. The source of funding would be the Agency's Water Transmission Agency Fund, which is derived from revenue bond proceeds and income from water sales by the Agency.

**POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AREAS:** The proposed Project may result in adverse changes to the physical environment. The Initial Study will analyze the potential impacts associated with Project construction, operation, and maintenance. Specific areas of analysis will include: aesthetics, agricultural resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, hazards, hydrology and water quality, land use, energy, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, utilities and service systems. Other areas of analysis may be added based on input from the public and public agencies during the Notice of Preparation review period. The IS will be made available to decision-makers, responsible and trustee agencies under CEQA, property owners, and the public for review and comment.

**PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR THIS NOTICE OF PREPARATION:** The public comment period for this Notice of Preparation will close at 5:00 p.m. on November 1, 2007 which is 45 days after its mailing. Interested parties will also have an opportunity to comment on the Initial Study after it is published and released for public review. Please send your written comments regarding this Notice of Preparation to: Marc Bautista, Sonoma County Water Agency, P.O. Box 11628, Santa Rosa, CA, 95406-1628 or visit [www.sonomacountywater.org](http://www.sonomacountywater.org). Trustee and responsible agencies are requested to include the name of a contact person with their written comments.

If you have any questions regarding this Notice of Preparation or the Agency's proposed Project, or if you want to request that your information be updated on the mailing list, please feel free to contact Marc Bautista at (707) 547-1900, or contact the Agency's public information line at (707) 521-2104.

**PUBLICATION DATE:** September 17, 2007